

CHAPTER VII

THE DOWNFALL OF LICINIUS

It will be convenient in this chapter to present a connected narrative of the course of political events from the Edict of Milan in 313 down to the overthrow of Licinius by Constantine in 324. We have seen that Maximian never moved a single step to help his ally, Maxentius, during Constantine's invasion of Italy, though he soon gave ample proof that his hostility had not abated by losing the territory of Licinius. The attack was by no means unexpected, Licinius was still at Milan, and troops had probably been drawn off into winter quarters, when the news came that Maximian had led a powerful army in Syria, had marched on to Bithynia regardless of the suffering of civilians and the havoc caused in the ranks by the rigors of the season, and had succeeded in crossing the Bosphorus. Apparently, Maximian was intending to besiege Byzantium before Licinius was ready to move from Italy to confront him. Byzantium capitulated after a siege of eleven days and Heraclea did not offer a prolonged resist. By this time, however, Licinius was getting